

To: Reynolds, Thomas[Reynolds.Thomas@epa.gov]
From: Garvin, Shawn
Sent: Fri 1/31/2014 1:44:04 PM
Subject: Re: EPA's lack of transparency in West Virginia

Thx

From: Reynolds, Thomas
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2014 8:36:16 AM
To: Garvin, Shawn
Subject: Fw: EPA's lack of transparency in West Virginia

Just fyi for you.

From: Ken Ward <kward@wvgazette.com>
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2014 8:24:16 AM
To: Reynolds, Thomas
Cc: 'Jeremy Richardson'; 'Tim Wheeler'; 'Ken Ward'
Subject: EPA's lack of transparency in West Virginia

Mr. Reynolds,

Hey there. It's Ken Ward, reporter at the Charleston Gazette in West Virginia.

I read with great interest your comments, posted on the website of the Union of Concerned Scientists in response to complaints about EPA's lack of scientific transparency regarding the chemical spill that has contaminated the drinking water supply for my family and 300,000 of our neighbors.

I was particularly struck by this portion of your letter:

"... We have responded directly and in a timely fashion to inquiries from more than two dozen media outlets, providing information on a wide range of issues, including the agency's role in the response, known information about the chemicals spilled, and EPA's regulatory authorities."
<http://blog.ucsusa.org/west-virginia-scientists-to-epa-cdc-allow-your-scientists-to-speak-389>

Perhaps you are aware of the facts, so I thought I would provide them to you.

Starting on Friday, Jan. 10, the day after the "do not use" order was issued for my community, I began seeking information from EPA officials in the regional office in Philadelphia. I was repeatedly given a short statement that basically said nothing. I asked to talk with EPA officials who were on the scene, or with those who were actually familiar with the issue and could answer the many questions I and my neighbors had about this incident.

Not until Wednesday, Jan. 15, did anyone from EPA get on the phone and actually speak with me and answer some questions. Shawn Garvin gave us a very brief interview, which Terri White of the public affairs office repeatedly tried to end, and which was ended when I asked if Mr. Garvin would want to come and meet with residents here or if he would drink the

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water that state officials had declared safe.

After this interview, I was told that if I had additional questions I should submit them to Ms. White and she would see that I got answers. I did so that evening. EPA did not respond to my Jan. 15 questions until more than a week later, on Jan. 23. In most instances, though, EPA didn't actually answer the questions and simply referred me to another agency.

Since that Jan. 23 "response", I have repeatedly asked again to be allowed to speak with someone who is on the scene and can provide EPA's perspective and perhaps add to the great lack of information that has caused so much loss of trust among the people of this community in the government agencies that are supposed to protect us. So far, no one from EPA has responded to those requests -- even to turn my requests down.

Perhaps you could explain to me exactly how the facts I have explained to you constitute responding to media inquiries "in a timely fashion" and "providing information on a wide range of issues" about an incident that the National Science Foundation this week referred to as "one of the largest human-made disasters in this century."

Or perhaps you could take steps to make the appropriate EPA officials available to answer my questions and provide information to this community.

As I'm sure you know, this is not the first time that members of the journalism community and the scientific community have voiced grave concerns about the great lack of transparency at EPA during the Obama administration. Over and over, organizations like the Society of Environmental Journalists have attempted to have a discussion with EPA about these problems, only to have EPA officials do nothing about them. Exactly what is it going to take for EPA to actually act as the open, transparency, government agency it used to be?

I look forward to your prompt response to this inquiry.

Ken Ward Jr.

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Staff Writer
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<http://wvgazette.com> or <http://wvgazette.com/News/MiningtheMountains>

Read my blog, Coal Tattoo at <http://blogs.wvgazette.com/coalattoo/> and follow me on Twitter, <http://twitter.com/Kenwardjr>
And check out Sustained Outrage, a Gazette watchdog journalism blog, <http://blogs.wvgazette.com/watchdog/>

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